

REVIEWS

A CAUSATION OF BUS DRIVER ACCIDENTS. By W. L. Cresswell and P. Froggatt. (Pp. ix + 298. 45s.) London, New York, Toronto: Published for the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust by the Oxford University Press, 1963.

THIS book is in the best traditions of the publications supported by the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust in that it is attractively produced, well written and highly topical. Indeed, it is not surprising that the Trust have sponsored this epidemiological study in these days when the human toll exacted by road accidents is a matter of national disquiet.

The authors have dealt with the concept of accident proneness in a well-designed piece of academic research in which they have conformed to a rigorous scientific and statistical discipline. The term "accident prone" has been in common use since the middle twenties, suggesting that certain persons in a group in identical circumstances are always more likely to sustain an accident than others, and has been suspect for some time but until now has not been seriously challenged.

This study describes the results of investigations into the road accidents incurred over a four-year period by bus and trolley-bus drivers employed by the Ulster Transport Authority and the Belfast Transport Authority which between them comprise the entire public road transport system in Northern Ireland. A clinical assessment of selected drivers who appeared in groups having the most unfortunate accident experience in two periods of time and control groups was also carried out. The main conclusion arrived at is that the validity of the concept of accident proneness is more than doubtful. The influence of age and experience of drivers as important factors in accident causation is demonstrated. Finally, recommendations are made of an alternative hypothesis to accident proneness and for further research into these complex matters which might be profitable.

This is a most readable and valuable contribution to the literature and it will be of interest to the increasing number of doctors involved in industrial medicine. The statistics are elaborate and indeed a separate section is devoted to statistical techniques which are beyond the scope of ordinary readers. The review of relevant literature is extensive and there is an excellent bibliography.

The final sentence in the book very adequately epitomises our present knowledge: "Tendency to accident is a hazard of living."

C. K.

EPIDEMIOLOGY: REPORTS ON RESEARCH AND TEACHING, 1962. Edited by J. Pemberton, M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.H. (Pp. xviii + 341. 55s.) London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

IN recent years much emphasis in the field of epidemiological enquiry has extended beyond the study of infectious conditions to include the examination of social, personal and demographic concomitants of the non-communicable diseases. The broad scope of this rapidly developing area of research is well demonstrated in this book, which comprises thirty-five papers selected from those read at the Third Scientific Conference of the International Epidemiological Association held at Korcula, Yugoslavia, in 1961.

This is not a textbook of epidemiology, nor are the papers intended to be comprehensive accounts of the subjects they discuss. For the most part they deal with research carried out by the authors themselves and their colleagues. Each paper is a discrete entity with its own extensive bibliography. The author of each is an acknowledged authority on the subject. The subjects have been grouped under various headings: Cancer; Diarrhoeal Diseases; Arterial Pressure; Occupational Diseases and Accidents; and Neurological Disease, Anaemia and Nephropathy comprise the first five sections. Of particular interest are Dr. Richard Doll's comprehensive paper on "The contribution of epidemiology to knowledge of Cancer," Professor Cruikshank's paper on "Diarrhoeal diseases in the United Kingdom," and Sir George Pickering's paper on "The inheritance of arterial pressure." The section dealing with occupational health is stimulating; this includes a report on the Northern Ireland survey